

**What is claimed is:**

1. A wedge dead end comprising:

a coupler for coupling said dead end to a support structure;

a gripper body defining a fixed longitudinally extending cable  
trough and a jaw guide disposed at a first angle relative to said cable  
trough, said jaw guide being closest to said cable trough at a gripper  
body forward end and diverging from said cable trough toward a  
gripper body rearward end, said gripper body defining a cable entry  
slot communicating with a cable space defined between said cable  
trough and said jaw guide;

a single wedge-shaped jaw having a guide structure on an  
upper surface and a longitudinally extending gripping surface on a  
bottom surface, said guide structure slidably received in said jaw  
guide and said jaw being movable relative to said body between a  
forward gripping position and a rearward open position, said jaw  
biased toward said forward end and said gripping position;

a latch for releasably retaining said jaw in said open position  
against said bias; and

~~a leg integrally connecting said coupling to said gripper body~~  
rearward end.

2. The wedge dead end of claim 1, wherein said cable trough is  
defined by a semi-cylindrical surface having a linear axis, said axis  
being generally parallel to and transversely offset from said leg.

3. The wedge dead end of claim 1, wherein said jaw guide is key-  
hole shaped, comprising a first portion having a first maximum lateral  
dimension and a longitudinal slot having a second maximum lateral  
dimension smaller than said first maximum lateral dimension, said  
second maximum lateral dimension defined between jaw guide lower  
shoulders, said guide structure having a key-shape complementary to

said jaw guide and said jaw is slidably retained to said gripper body by engagement of said guide structure in said jaw guide.

5           4.     The wedge dead end of claim 3, wherein said first portion is generally cylindrical and said guide structure key-shaped configuration comprises a barrel-shaped portion complementary to said first portion.

10          5.     The wedge dead end of claim 1, wherein said gripper surface is substantially parallel to said cable trough during movement of said jaw relative to said gripper body.

15          6.     The wedge dead end of claim 1, wherein said gripper surface and said upper surface are disposed at a second angle relative to each other, said first and second angles being equal.

7.     The wedge dead end of claim 6, wherein said first and second angles are in the range of 10° to 20°.

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20          8.     The wedge dead end of claim 3, wherein said jaw upper surface includes a longitudinal upwardly projecting rib slidably engaged between said jaw guide lower shoulders.

25          9.     The wedge dead end of claim 1, wherein said latch comprises:  
            a groove in said jaw; and  
            a projection from said gripper body slidably received in said groove.

30          10.    The wedge dead end of claim 9, wherein said groove includes a detent and said projection releasably engages said detent to retain said jaw in said open position against said bias.

11. The wedge dead end of claim 1, wherein said gripper surface comprises teeth for gripping a conductor.

5 12. The wedge dead end of claim 1, wherein said conductor trough has a substantially smooth surface.

13. The wedge dead end of claim 1, wherein said guide structure projects from a forward end of said jaw and said wedge dead end comprises:

10 a spring compressed in said jaw guide behind said guide structure to bias said jaw toward said gripping position.

14. A wedge dead end comprising:

15 a gripper body defining a linear cable trough and a jaw guide longitudinally extending between forward and rearward ends of said gripper body, said jaw guide and cable trough converging toward said gripper body forward end; and

one wedge-shaped jaw having an upper guide structure engaged with said jaw guide and a lower cable gripping surface disposed generally parallel to said cable trough, said jaw moveable relative to said gripper body between a rearward open position wherein said cable gripping surface is spaced apart from said cable trough to at least partially define a longitudinally open ended cable entry slot and a forward gripping position wherein said cable gripping surface approaches said cable trough so as to come into a wedging engagement against a conductor disposed therebetween.

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15. The wedge dead end of claim 14, comprising:

a leg extending from said gripper body rearward end; and

30 a coupling connected to said leg and rearwardly spaced from said gripper body,

wherein said leg is laterally offset from an axis of said cable trough.

5 16. The wedge dead end of claim 14, wherein said jaw is spring biased toward said gripping position and said dead end comprises:

a latch for releasably retaining said jaw in said open position against said spring bias.

10 17. The wedge dead end of claim 14, wherein said gripping surface comprises teeth.

18. The wedge dead end of claim 14, wherein said cable trough has a substantially smooth surface.

15 19. The wedge dead end of claim 14, wherein said jaw includes an upper surface opposed to said cable gripping surface and disposed at a first angle relative thereto and said jaw guide is disposed at a second angle relative to said cable trough, said first angle being equal to said second angle.

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20. The wedge dead end of claim 19, wherein said first and second angles are between 10° and 20°.